First Slide (Meet the Presenters)

Hi! I'm Angel York and I use she/her pronouns.

And I'm April Wick; also she/her pronouns.

Today we're going to talk about similarities between being trans and using active transportation, and how we hope recognition of those similarities can build solidarity and lead to more intersectional activism.

Throughout this talk, we are inconsistent with our language around active transportation. As people who primarily bike or walk for transportation, we're in the habit of talking about bike advocacy, but most of these things apply to all forms of active transportation and micro-mobility so please bear with us.

Next Slide (Introduction / Table of Contents)

We'll discuss similarities first, talk a bit about intersectionality, then differences, and then we'll talk about why all this matters before our conclusion.

We will keep this brief. We are not currently affiliated with an academic institution, so we've been asked to limit our presentation to 10 minutes.

Next Slide (Similarities: Joy)

First, let's talk about joy. If you follow trans discourse at all, you'll have noticed the shift away from using Gender Dysphoria as a primary criteria for identifying as trans - instead the conversation is about Gender Incongruence, and an important component of that is Gender Euphoria. Hashtag TransJoy comes up a lot online now. That parallels a thread we see in bike advocacy. There are lots of reasons people ride, but common advocacy slogans include "Put the fun between your legs" and "this machine brings me joy."

Next Slide (Similarities: Non-normativity)

The next similarity is non-normativity. In the trans community, we constantly face cisnormativity, the idea that it's normal to identify as the gender you were assigned at birth, and the corresponding lack of consideration for anyone who doesn't. This underlies so much of the political and personal violence against trans people.

On the cycling side, a recent paper coined the term motor-normativity. This refers to the idea that motor vehicles are the default, that of course you're going to drive a car. As someone who grew up in the suburban United States, I grew up assuming that I would end up driving a car

someday, just like I assumed I would always identify with the gender I was assigned at birth(I was wrong on both counts!).

Next Slide (Similarities: Harassment)

That non-normativity carries certain risks, including harassment and aggression. We've got two quotes on the screen here, both of them about people who reported harassment. One of them is from a survey of cyclists about harassment on the road, the other one is a survey of trans people about harassment on public transit. They look remarkably similar. Can you guess which one is which? Ok!

Next Slide (continuation)

On the left we have the National Transgender Discrimination Survey, where respondents reported "harassment or disrespect." On the right we have Australian cyclists, the majority of whom "reported harassment in the previous 12 months."

And in both cases, the harassment is a result of non-normativity: below the NTDS data we have an excerpt from Transmobilities pointing out that "participants understood their experiences of harassment, discrimination, and violence as due to the visibility of their non-binary gender or transgender identities" Below the Australian cycling data a quote on how "a large proportion of drivers hold negative views about cyclists and these attitudes result in more aggressive driving".

This parallel is something I considered recently when I was thinking about coming out as trans. I knew that I would be opening myself up to more harassment, more potential violence, and I said to myself, "Gee, this sounds familiar. Been there, done that." These are the same factors I considered when I decided I was never going to drive a car. It was the same calculation: choosing safety or choosing what felt right for me.

Next Slide (Similarities: Identity)

The next similarity is identity. I don't think we need to argue the concept of gender as a central component of identity: we already have the phrase "gender identity." Gender is central enough to be a legally protected class in some places.

We don't find this so much in discussions of transportation, so I'm going to talk about that a bit more. Susan Hanson, writing on Gender and Mobility, says that for 19th century feminist cyclist Frances Willard, “mobility is completely bound up with questions such as, ‘who am I?’, ‘what can I accomplish in life?’, ‘what do I see as possible?’” That sounds like identity!

But when we start saying that people choosing active transportation should be able to live safely, that we merit some consideration as a marginalized group, often the response is "Well,

you weren't born a cyclist. You chose to ride a bike. It's a choice." That last sentence should be a red flag right off the bat - framing gender and sexuality as “choices” has long been a homophobic and transphobic talking point.

We don't think it's much better when applied to transportation, and here's why: For many people, ethical concerns (climate change, traffic deaths, etc.) are one of the most important reasons to choose active transportation. If your transportation choices are central to your ethics, they are central to who you are, to your identity. Whether or not you use active transportation is a choice, yes, but you might not be able to choose differently and still consider yourself the same person.

My transportation is more central to my identity than gender is. For others, it is secondary, or secondary to other factors.

Next Slide (Intersectionality)

That brings us to a brief but important discussion of intersectionality. We would be remiss if we didn't point out that it's harder to be a trans cyclist than it is to be either trans or a cyclist individually.

The same is true for race, class, ability, and other factors: They all intersect with both gender and mobility.

There are many reasons people don't use active transportation, and (bringing this back to similarities, though the details of individual experiences are different) there are also many reasons people don't transition, even when they want to. Among those reasons are intersecting axes of oppression, and that's part of why intersectional advocacy is so critical.

Next Slide (Differences)

We've been focusing on similarities, but we should also acknowledge that there are some differences. We've only got a couple on this slide, because we kept trying to brainstorm more and then when we thought about them realized they were actually similarities. If you come up with any others, we'd be interested to learn about them!

The first one we thought of is a matter of scale: Trans and non-binary people are probably a permanent minority. Estimates of the percentage of people who are trans are increasing - from, what, 2 to 5 to maybe 9 percent of the population at most? Based on that, we don't expect that cis folks will ever be in the minority, nor is that the goal of most trans advocacy as far as we’re aware. Whereas for many advocates of active transportation, ourselves included, the long-term goal is to replace the majority of car trips with other modes, be they active transportation or

public transit. Our goal as bike advocates is to eventually become part of a majority, and that's going to result in different approaches sometimes.

The other notable difference is purpose: Gender and mobility can both be aspects of someone's identity, but gender is about identity and social communication, whereas mobility is about identity and transportation.

Next Slide (Advocacy: Why does this matter?)

What does this matter for advocacy? Why talk about this? In *Intersectionality: Inequalities, Places and Emotions*, Maria Rodó-Zárate writes, "Recognition of the pain of one strand of oppression by someone who does not suffer personally from it is an essential step towards establishing political alliances and for general change on a social level." We need to be able to relate to each other, to have understanding and empathy, so that we can work together.

One way we can build that intra-minority solidarity is by pointing out similarity perceptions - helping people recognize how we experience similar kinds of marginalization, and how we choose to do what we do for similar reasons in spite of that marginalization. Making these connections can allow us to build more solidarity and work toward greater intersectionality.

Intra-minority solidarity is especially important for bicycle advocacy because it has a track record of not being intersectional - not just in terms of gender, but also race, class, et cetera.

Next Slide (Academia: Why does this matter?)

Why does this matter for academia? We're bringing up Hanson again because this paper is one of the few we've seen that ties together the "two quite distinctive strands of thinking about the question of gender and mobility [...]: how does mobility shape gender and how does gender shape mobility" on an even footing. We haven't done a comprehensive review of the mobilities literature, but we noticed a tendency to look at active transportation as either something you must do because you're marginalized (say, you can't afford a car) or something that you avoid because you're marginalized (you are likely to be harassed).

What we don't see as much is discussion of mobility as a way of being marginalized, about how anyone using non-car modes of transportation is limited in where and when they can travel safely.

On the other side of the conversation, we see a lot of transportation research, e.g. bike counts, tends to look at gender as just male or female, if at all.

Next Slide (CONCLUSION)

We're hoping to bring these similarity perceptions into our own advocacy work going forward, and we hope it may be helpful or interesting to some of you as well. So, we'll leave you with a question: How could this relate to what you do? Thank you!

Citations

(really these go in the presentation; we don't need to read them out)

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Rodó-Zarate, M. (2022). The intersectional wound. Guerrilla Media Collective. https://guerrillamedia.coop/en/the-intersectional-wound/ This excerpt from the book "Interseccionalidad: Desigualdades, lugares y emociones" (Intersectionality: Inequalities, Places and Emotions) by Maria Rodó Zárate, published by Bellaterra Edicions was translated by Alex Minshall.